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Oswald's Widow Was 'Sick Man,'

Compiled From Press Dispatches

WASHINGTON — Calling her late husband a "sick" man, Marina Oswald Porter testified under oath today she believes Lee Harvey Oswald shot and killed President John F. Kennedy and that he acted alone.

In her second day of dramatic testimony before the House Assassinations Committee, the Russian-born witness said Oswald was probably mentally ill at the time of Kennedy's murder.

But, she said, she did not recognize his illness for what it was.

In the weeks before he killed Kennedy, Oswald sat on his darkened, screened-in front porch and pretended to shoot at imaginary targets with a Mannlicher-Carcano rifle.

He donned a long, black raincoat on hot, sunny days and rode city buses with the gun hidden beneath it on his way to target practice.

He justified his attempt to shoot right-wing Gen. Edwin Walker by saying he was trying to rid the world of a "Fascist," comparing the John Birch Society supporter with Adolf Hitler.

He asked his pregnant wife, who could speak no English, to help him hijack an airplane to Cuba.

Piece by piece, Mrs. Porter is assembling what she calls the "puzzle" of Lee Harvey Oswald for the committee.

She said she knew something was seriously wrong with Oswald after his attempt to kill Walker in the spring of 1963. Up to that time, she said, she thought his fascination with his rifle was just part of his virile world.

"All of a sudden I realized it wasn't just a manly hobby," she said in thickly accented English. "I realized he was capable of killing somebody. I wasn't happy, but I didn't have much place to go."

Later, she said, she felt "ashamed" she had not turned Oswald in to the police. "But I couldn't speak English . . . I didn't approve of what he did, but at the same time, he was my husband, I was loyal to him."

"He thought he was really doing a good service to the country by eliminating someone like Mr. Walker," she told the committee.

She admitted that when she first heard on television that Kennedy had been shot from the Texas School Book Depository where Oswald worked, her "sixth sense" told her he had done it.

She fled the room so that the woman with whom she was living could not see her reaction to the news, she said.

Yet 15 years after the killing she still cannot explain it, she told the panel.

"I don't know if I am qualified to make a statement on that," she said when asked Oswald's motivations.

"I knew one side of Lee only . . . I don't have the qualifications to put all the pieces of the puzzle together."

But she discounts theories that Oswald was involved in a conspiracy to kill Kennedy.

"Lee was secretive as a person . . . He would not share his plans with anyone," she said. "I'm not a psychiatrist. I'm not a good judge of character. But living with a person for a few years, you can judge.

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Believes Mate Acted Alone

"He wasn't very trustworthy, an open person. So personally I doubt he would confide in anyone."

He was so secretive that before they were married in the Soviet Union, he did not even tell her he had a living mother and brothers, she said. When he wrote in his diary, in English she could not read, he closed himself in a closet and told her not to disturb him, she said.

He bought a pistol months before she ever knew about it, she said. Oswald lived in a rooming house in Dallas under an assumed name. He only told his wife what the name was after she had tried to reach him by telephone there and no one knew the name Oswald.

The night before the killing of Kennedy, Oswald visited her at the home of the friend with whom she was temporarily living. She thought he was trying to make up after an argument they had had. The Warren Commission said he picked up his rifle, stored in the garage, on that visit.

She was in no mood to make up.

"I was angry, I wanted to punish him," she said.

In the months after the killing, she said she "immaturely" attempted to find a "logical" conclusion for the act and decided Oswald actually was trying to shoot Texas Gov. John B. Connally, riding a few feet away from Kennedy in the same car.

While Connally was secretary of the Navy, Oswald had appealed unsuccessfully to have his undesirable discharge from the Marine Corps upgraded. Connally was wounded by one of the bullets fired into the car in the Dallas motorcade on Nov. 22, 1963.

Now she apparently rejects that theory, but said she has no other explanation to offer.

Oswald always spoke highly of Kennedy, she said.

UPI Telephoto

Marina Oswald Porter

"It was very difficult for me to accept that someone could like someone so much and do something like that," she said, adding that she does not know whether, or why, Oswald committed the crime.

Reporters who last saw her in Dallas 15 years ago after Kennedy's death were stunned at the change in her appearance yesterday. Then she was pudgy. She wore a babushka and carried two babies. She looked like a Russian peasant girl.

Now 37, she looks stylish, well-dressed, slim and attractive. She is remarried to a Texas businessman.